

- (a) the highest operating ratio of Railways achieved during last decade since 1999-2000;
- (b) the lowest operating ratio during the same period;
- (c) the steps taken to bring down operating ratio further; and
- (d) the targeted operating ratio for the next five years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b)  
The highest operating ratio achieved during last decade since 1999-2000 was 98.34% in 2000-01 and the lowest operating ratio achieved was 75.94% in 2007-08.

(c) and (d) Although no definite targets for the Operating Ratio have been kept for the future years, it is a constant endeavour on part of the Railways to reduce the Operating Ratio by augmenting earnings and containing the working expenses. In order to generate more revenue, railways are continuously striving to capture more and more traffic. Besides creation of additional capacity, the thrust is also on optimum utilization of the existing one. In this regard, the initiatives under freight business segment include plans to improve throughput through increased productivity and efficiency, reduction in wagon turn around time, simplification and rationalization of freight structure and goods tariff, discount on incremental traffic in empty flow direction and lean season, new premium registration scheme etc. Besides, introducing new trains, initiatives under passenger and parcel business segments include extension of PRS and UTS facilities to more and more locations, speeding up of trains, review of trains with low patronage, deployment of additional coaches in well patronized trains, additional leasing of parcel space in certain nominated trains, leasing of vacant compartment of guard in front of SLR coach, etc.

Apart from above, all possible measures are being taken to control expenditure which broadly include tight control over expenditure in areas such as fuel/power consumption, contractual payments, purchase of materials etc., productive use of manpower and efforts at staff right-sizing, better utilization of assets, improvement in inventory management and various steps to reduce the cost of operation and maintenance of rolling stock, etc. The expenditure in the coming years will also reduce as the arrear payments on account of VI Central Pay Commission will not recur beyond 2009-10 thereby helping the Operating Ratio to improve.

#### **Children working in gauge conversion work**

†1612. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that country's children are working in gauge conversion work progressing on the Gorakhpur-Nautanva rail lines and for which they are being paid only 13 rupees;
- (b) whether Government proposes to take any action in this regard; and
- (c) if so, by when and how along with the details thereof?

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) No child labour is working in Gauge Conversion work of Gorakhpur-Nautanwa section.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

#### Doubling of railway lines in Kerala

1613. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether doubling of railway lines at various sections in Kerala is under progress;

(b) if so, the details including total length of railway lines, length of single line and length of double line facilities available in Kerala, as on today, category-wise;

(c) the details of doubling of lines started in various sections of railway lines in Kerala and expected date of completion, as on today, category-wise;

(d) whether doubling of lines from Mangalore to Kanyakumari would be taken up with utmost urgency;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As on 31.3.2008, total length of railway lines in Kerala was 1050 Km. Out of this, double broad gauge line was 576 Km., single broad gauge line was 357 Km and single meter gauge line was 117 Km. Further, patch doublings of Ernakulam-Mulanturutti (17.37 km) & Mavelikara-Kayankulam (7.89 km) sections have been completed after 31.3.2008 and are awaiting commissioning. On meter gauge route, 45 Km from Quilon to Punalur has been blocked for conversion.

(c) Details of ongoing doubling projects felling fully/partly in the State of Kerala alongwith status and their target date for completion, wherever fixed, are given as under:-

S.No.	Name of Project	Length (In Km)	Status & Target date for completion wherever fixed
1	2	3	4
1.	Mulanturutti-Kuruppantara	24.00	State Government is yet to hand over required land to Railways.
2.	Kuruppantara-Chingavanam	26.54	Final location survey completed. Requisition for 30 hectare of land has been submitted to State Government. No land is handed over.
3.	Chengannur-Chingavanam	26.5	Requisition for 18.88 hectare of land has been submitted to State Government. No land is handed over.